



VH1

Lesson for Humanities (Social Science
and English)

Soundtrack to War
VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson 3 - Creating Music

Note to Teachers: The programs viewed in conjunction with these lesson plans may include references, consistent with the events portrayed, to violent acts, and topics of a war-like or political nature. Because this may be considered inappropriate for classroom use in some communities, you are encouraged to review the programs before presenting them to your students, and if necessary, choose those sections that enhance your lesson and are acceptable for use in your classroom.

Important Note: Due to the nature of this program and the topics discussed through the lessons, teachers should use careful judgment when deciding whether to present this material to students younger than high school age.

Overview/Goals

The *Soundtrack to War* video engages students by interviewing selected soldiers participating in the Iraq war. Each of the soldiers explains what music they listen to prior to, during and after battle. The goal of this lesson is to explore this music and attempt to develop an understanding of the role music plays in this conflict. Students will create their own lyrics to attempt to construct a pro-war and anti-war song.

Objectives

- **Students will understand/be able to relate:**
 - connect to people (soldiers) through their music choices
 - that music serves as a major conduit for the transport of knowledge, (information and material goods between East and West and results in global exchange of scientific and cultural traditions)
 - illuminate the historical contributions that music makes socially and culturally to
 - explore musical influences within a broader global context
 - migration of ideas among communities
 - How in this world of increasing awareness and interdependence, music can act as a magnet to draw people together (as in the different groups of soldiers identifying with certain types of music).
 - as we interact with unfamiliar musical traditions we encounter voices that are not exclusive to one community. We discover trans-national voices that belong to one world.

National Standards for History

Standard 2D - The student understands contemporary American culture.
Therefore, the student is able to

- Grade 9-12 Analyze how social change and renewed ethnic diversity has affected artistic expression and popular culture. [Analyze cause-and-effect relationships]
- Grade 7-12 Explain the influence of media on contemporary American culture. [Explain historical continuity and change]

Materials

VHS VCR Player

- Television
- Audio playback equipment
- VH1's *Soundtrack to War*
- Web-based lesson materials
- Pencils/Pens and paper (students)
- Internet Access (library or home) - If Internet access is not available, teachers can print out the lyrics to songs and the timeline information. Students could then have access to the information needed.

Prior Knowledge:

- Students are familiar with the basic facts of the current war in Iraq
- Students can identify the various types of music in the program



Procedures

Day 1 – students watch the video *Soundtracks to War* (approximately 45 minutes) As they watch the video students will make note of the songs and lyrics or themes that appear. If time allows, some general discussion about the role of music in soldiers lives should be completed.

Day 2 – Students need to read and analyze the words to selected songs from “war” music. Pick two or three from each column. Read the lyrics (teachers can either do this in an Internet lab, or print them out before hand - perhaps on transparencies if completed together as a class). Look up any words or historical references you do not understand (this might be done as a homework assignment, together in class, or individually on the Internet).

Selected Vietnam war era song lyrics	Selected Iraq war era song lyrics
Hey, Hey USA (http://www.mp3.com.au/track.asp?id=32711)	War (http://www.onegoodmove.org/1gm/lyrics/war.html)
Blowin' in the Wind (http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/blowin.html)	The Wartime President - to the tune of Knick/Knack (http://onegoodmove.org/1gm/lyrics/wartimepresident.html)
Ohio (http://www.thrasherswheat.org/fot/lyrics_ohio.htm)	Travelin' Soldier (current song but refers to Vietnam) (http://www.countrygoldusa.com/travelin_soldier.asp)
Born in the USA (http://www.zmag.org/Songs/songarchive.htm#BORN%20IN%20THE%20USA)	Guantanamo Bay - to the tune of Sitting on the Dock (http://www.oregonwaterfalls.com/cc/Guantanamo_Bay.html)

Day 3 – Teacher should begin class by ensuring students have completed their work. Answer any questions they may have about the 2 or 3 songs they chose. At the end of the discussion, students should be told to construct their own lyrics (minimum four stanza's with a chorus). They may start this in class and finish as a homework assignment.

Day 4 – Check student work. Have each student read their lyrics and explain what they wrote and why. Leave time for questions by other students. General questions from the class should cover these topics (they might also be used as a homework assignment on Day 3:

1. Question 1 - Analyze the lyrics of the songs you have written. What historical references do you make? Do you mention any people (individuals or groups)? Compare your song to one of the songs in the video *Soundtracks to War*.
2. Question 2 - What is the apparent central theme of each anti-war song written in this class? Is this similar or different to the songs from the video?
3. Question 3 - Make a listing of all the issues/themes of the songs written. Can you categorize them by what the theme is? (e.g. personal loss of loved one, all war is wrong, this particular war is wrong because..., the government is bad).

4. Question 4 - How do the lyrics of the song(s) you wrote compare with a song from the Vietnam era?
5. Question 5 - In the Dixie Chicks song *Travelin' Soldier*, the soldier is going to Vietnam, but this song is a modern song. Why do you think the author of the song used Vietnam as a war reference?
6. Question 6 - In your opinion, What is the role of music in an anti-war movement? How important is it?

Extensions

1. Students may also expand their knowledge with the other lessons attached to this documentary
2. Students can attempt to write a pro-war lyric for extra credit

Supplemental Resources:

Websites related to the anti-war movement on the current Iraq war	
http://www.lacarte.org/songs/anti-war/	Links to Legal Downloads and Lyrics
http://www.peace-not-war.org/jukebox/index.html	Peace Jukebox - War Music
Background Reading on the song Ohio (http://www.thrasherswheat.org/fot/ohio.htm)	Background Reading on the Travelin' Soldier (http://www.warblogging.com/archives/000626.php)



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